ELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER

-0, No. 4 August, 1989

Since 1949 the purpose of Fellowship in Prayer is to promote the practice of prayer among all religious faiths whose fundamental belief is in God regardless of race, creed, or color, and whose tenets include the universal attributes of truth, honesty, justice, and mercy, that thereby there may arise a closer relation to Almighty God and a deeper spirit of fellowship among mankind.

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Cover Photograph by Carl G. Karsch

During the first weekend in June, clergy of all faiths celebrated the first Environmental Sabbath, initiated by the United Nations Environment Programme. In creating the Sabbath, each faith used its own sources of wisdom and spirituality to move the human heart to a realization and acceptance of our responsibility to create an ecological society in which we all live lovingly and cooperatively within and with the rest of Creation.

Among the reflections and prayers for the Environmental Sabbath, I would particularly like to share with you the following queries to its members by the Religious Society of Friends, followed by a universal Prayer of Healing:

Am I walking gently on the earth? Do I live simply, mindful how my life affects the earth and her resources?

"Do I honor the life of all living things, the order of nature, the wildness of wilderness, the richness of the created world? Do I seek the holiness which God has placed in these things, and the measure of Light which God has lent them?

Do I extend the Quaker practice of answering that of God in every person to answering that of God in all creation?

What am I doing to teach others, including children and members of my community, to cherish each strand of the intricate web of life?

What actions am I taking to reverse the destruction of the earth's ecosystems, and to promote her health?

How does my relationship to the local and global environment exemplify my attunement to and appreciation of the essential oneness of all creation? Do I accept personal responsibility for stewardship of creation?

Do I recognize that the preparation for and the conduct of war are among the greatest causes of environmental degradation?

Does my daily life exemplify and reflect my respect for the oneness of creation and my care for the environment?"

Am I willing to consume less myself in order to promote rightful sharing of the world's limited resources in a manner that reduces environmental degradation? Am I prepared to give up products, services and

convenience, even those I may consider as necessities, in order to help preserve life on earth?

A prayer of healing

LEADER:

To bring new life to the land
To restore the waters
To refresh the air

RESPONSE:

We join with the earth and with each other

LEADER:

To renew the forests
To care for the plants
To protect the creatures

RESPONSE:

We join with the earth and with each other

LEADER:

To celebrate the seas
To rejoice in the sunlight
To sing the song of the stars

RESPONSE:

We join with the earth and with each other

LEADER:

To recall our destiny
To renew our spirits
To reinvigorate our bodies

RESPONSE:

We join with the earth and with each other

LEADER:

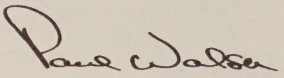
To recreate the human community
To promote justice and peace
To remember our children

RESPONSE:

We join with the earth and with each other

Reverend Daniel Martin, Religious Advisor to the United Nations Environment Programme, points out that: "The environmental crisis facing us is truly a spiritual one since it concerns humankind's basic relationship to the rest of Creation." He asks us to open our hearts to a "true spirituality that leads to a knowledge and love of Creation, to a life of harmony with the universe."

Let us join with the earth and with each other in that opening.



Paul Walsh
President
Fellowship in Prayer, Inc.

Letters come continually to the Fellowship in Prayer office from readers asking for prayers. Most of these people are undergoing physical, spiritual, or emotional pain. I would like to tell them about a talk I heard that may bring some comfort and hope. At a recent retreat, Stephen Levine, a spiritual teacher whose "Forgiveness Meditation" appears in this issue of *Fellowship in Prayer*, told a story of an extraordinary healing. A woman was alone in a hospital one night in very great pain. Afraid that she was dying, and unable to turn to God, she suddenly saw herself as "one of the 10,000 in pain." She began to envision a long series of people across the world who at that moment might be experiencing similar pain, and felt identified with them, united to them. She imagined an Eskimo woman giving birth, an old man in China dying of hepatitis, an Ethiopian mother with a starving child; then many others. "I suddenly saw," she said later, "that it wasn't just *my* pain; it was *the* pain." Not just *my* suffering, but *everyone's* suffering.

Without knowing it, this woman participated in a liberating, entirely spiritual activity. At the boundaries of her endurance, she had stumbled upon an ancient form of meditative prayer that took her beyond herself and into the presence of God. As she let go of her anguish and let her awareness focus on the suffering of others, she entered into a larger life that surrounds us all as though we were tiny drops in an endless sea. Through her prayer of self-transcendence, she discovered that we are all part of one another in the Life of God. A tremendous sense of strain must have fallen away as she surrendered to the inevitable and allowed herself to be "one of the 10,000 in pain."

After that deep experience the patient recovered from her "terminal" illness. It is not surprising that she also underwent a remarkable change of character. Once self-centered and withdrawn, she began to reach out to others in a way that was never before possible for her. For the remainder of her stay in the hospital, her room became "a center of love" that hospital personnel would visit just for the joy of her presence.

Thich Nhat Hanh, a Vietnamese monk who was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize by Martin Luther King, has a passage in *The Sun My Heart* that echoes this kind of experience. He is talking about the power of daily prayer:

Practice until you recognize your presence in everyone else on the bus, in the subway, in the concentration camp, working in the fields, in a leaf, in a caterpillar, in a dew drop, in a ray of sunshine. Meditate until you see yourself in a speck of dust and in the most distant galaxy.

As you continue practicing, the flower of insight will blossom in you, along with the flowers of compassion, tolerance, happiness, and letting go. You can let go, because you do not need to keep anything for yourself. You are no longer a fragile and small "self" that needs to be preserved by all possible means. Since the happiness of others is also your happiness, you are now filled with joy, and you have no jealousy or selfishness. Free from attachment to wrong views and prejudices, you are filled with tolerance. The door of your compassion is wide open, and you also suffer the sufferings of all living beings. As a result, you do whatever you can to relieve these sufferings.

How many "flowers of compassion" would blossom across the globe if each of us brought to prayer every moment of pain—physical or psychological—and united with "the 10,000" in similar pain? Enough to renew the wilted greenness of the entire world.

Mary Ford-Grabowsky
Editor

Now I bow down before you
Neither to the East nor to the West
Neither to the North nor to the South
do I make obeisance
For I see Thee in all
And knowing that my finite life is
contained in Thine Infinite Majesty
My soul is at peace.
Paramanandra

To unify your life unify your desires. To spiritualize your life, spiritualize your desires. To spiritualize your desires, desire to be without desire.
Thomas Merton

A couple came to the Sufi master with a disagreement. After listening to the husband's story, the Master said, "You are right." He then listened to the wife relate her side of the story, and said, "You are right." His aide, a bit bewildered, took the Master aside and asked him, "How can they both be right?" The Master turned to him and said, "You are right, too."
Source Unknown

That are years that ask questions, and years that answer questions.
Zora Neale Hurston

Seek first the kingdom of God.
Mt. 6.33

If I lose gentleness, I lose a basic condition for uncovering the presence of God I already am in the depths of my being. To live in divine likeness is to live gently. Gentleness is thus a pathway to the life of prayer.
Adrian van Kaam

Praise God, sun and moon, Praise God, all you shining stars.
Ps. 148.3

A Physician's Spiritual Journey

WILLIAM F. HAYNES, JR.

When this physician has done for a patient all that modern medical technology has made possible, he offers to pray with that person. The presence of God's healing Spirit "speaks and acts through me in a way I never dreamed possible," he writes. Some people recover totally, others become free of pain, others experience reconciliations with family members, and many return their doctor's love with prayers for his own needs.

Awakening

If someone dropped a china plate out of a tenth floor window and it landed on the cement pavement below, the plate would be shattered in many pieces. This was the way my life felt several years ago when I found myself confronting an unexpected divorce. Were this same plate to be reassembled, it would be a different item indeed. Putting together the many scattered pieces would take much time and diligence. But more importantly, the plate would be transformed, be different, and have a certain uniqueness about it. Likewise, it might very well be used for a more useful purpose than before. This article depicts a time of brokenness in my life, a process of "picking up the pieces." It is the result of my journey through a very dark tunnel—a place of dying and at the same time of reaching the very deepest center of my being. The pain, the feelings of rejection, and sense of failure during the ensuing many months were ultimately replaced by an inner healing and peace—creating a new spiritual dimension to my personal life and medical practice. I came to more fully experience what St. Paul said about "dying to the old self." Without my own inner healing taking place, I realized that I would not enjoy God's gift of inner peace. Similarly, without inner peace, I would not be an effective channel for healing the needs of others and, after all being a physician, I was supposed to be a healer. As Christians, our goal, in my opinion, is to glorify God in our lives. This is clearly stated in scripture by Matthew: "You are the light of the world . . . so let your

William Haynes, a cardiologist in Princeton, NJ, will be describing his idea of the doctor-patient relationship in a forthcoming book, Steep Slopes and Beyond.

Tom Dunham

William F. Haynes, Jr.

light shine before men that they may see your good works and glory your Father that is in Heaven" (Matt. 5.15,16).

People everywhere are hurting. Regardless of their socioeconomic backgrounds; people are crying out to be listened to, to be cared for, to be touched. Patients especially want an ear that listens and an understanding heart to be attentive to them. We physicians must react with compassion and not just sympathy. We have to lighten our patients' yokes. We have to be present with our hearts and not just our scientific minds. Chuck Swindoll touched on this when he wrote, "When people are hurting, they need much more than an accurate diagnosis." Our spiritual nature must be able to communicate with their spiritual nature—we must sense a oneness with each patient.

In so many cases, the great advances of medical bioengineering have resulted in separating us even further from patients. We are travelling down the road of high technology while ignoring in many cases the spiritual side of caring. The scientific advances, which have helped save so many lives have at the same time replaced hands-on patient care. Patients can be physically cured but not emotionally or spiritually healed. Some medical schools are attempting to remedy this situation by devoting a few hours to the "human side" of patient care. This is a start, but it hardly scratches the surface.

Physician-patient rapport and communication are important in this age of declining respect for doctors and rising malpractice premiums. The issue is not to ignore modern medical technology, but to be more attentive to patients' spiritual needs.

At the present time, not a day passes without my praying with one or two patients, and frequently patients pray for my needs as well. All this has resulted in a new joy not present over the previous 20 years! This Presence speaks and acts through me in a way I never dreamed possible. A certain openness to God's abiding within me at all times leads to the realization that He is also inside of the one you are with, even though he or she may not even think of himself or herself as a Child of God. This openness to God's presence leads to a spiritual connection between physician and patient, which has a positive impact on communication and healing and has led to many miraculous recoveries both large and small. Let me describe a few of these. Names and at times circumstances will be altered to protect doctor-patient confidentiality.

Healings

A fifty-year-old male patient was recently admitted to the coronary care unit with a heart attack. He was anxious, had a rapid heart rate, and was suffering from moderately severe chest pain. The essential medical treatment was begun, but he was still very frightened. By laying on of hands to his chest, thanking the Lord for being present at this time, and reassuring him that the Lord was going to enter into his total healing, one could see him sigh deeply, and settle back in bed. One could almost see the level of adrenaline in his blood fall. In addition, one could watch the bedside monitor show the heart rate fall from 110 beats a minute down to 85 beats a minute within a very short time after ending the prayer. This was accomplished without the aid of any drugs, many of which we know can have a multiple number of side effects. The patient subsequently had an uncomplicated course in the hospital and was discharged home some six days later.

Medically speaking, the greatest enemy to the recent heart attack victim is a fast heart rate. Fast heart rates, frequently caused or aggravated by fear and anxiety, will cause the area of damage to spread with a resultant larger, noncontractile scar and a patient's incurring a potentially greater chance to be a permanent cardiac cripple. A number of drugs, such as digitalis, beta-blockers, and excessive sedations can slow the fast heart rate. But, on the other hand, they all have side effects. Anxiety and fear result in an oversecretion of adrenaline and adrenal gland hormones that can lead to frequent palpitations or potentially dangerous rhythm disturbances in addition to the fast heart rate. In recent years, more attention is being focused on the role of emotions and the central nervous system in causing lethal cardiac rhythm disturbances, e.g., in conditions of stress and anxiety.

When the above conditions can be ameliorated by calling upon God's healing power and love and peace, what a miracle this can be!

The next case history concerns a lady who had a massive heart attack while driving her car on the New Jersey Turnpike. She was a new patient. She came into the hospital Emergency Room, had a cardiac arrest, was in coma, and required a cardiac pacemaker. After a few days in the Intensive Care Unit in a comatose state, she was asked, "Should we write a no-code order? (This term means no heroic resuscitations). Her family

Cliff Moore

consisted of two children; one had flown in from the Midwest and the other lived in a nearby town. That evening, with some discernment, it occurred to me that perhaps we all should just pray for her because the situation looked terribly desperate, and she was not responding to the usual medical treatment. The family was most eager to do this, so we went into the patient's room and drew the curtains to be private with our prayer. A pulmonary technician was already there, and we asked him if he would like to pray with us, and he said he would. We all placed our hands on this woman and asked the Holy Spirit to come in and do His

wondrous works to help to heal her right now. Much to our joy, the patient moved at the conclusion of the prayer, opened her eyes, and actually made attempts to sit up in bed. The son fell to his knees and prayed and wept. There was so much commotion that the nurse ran in. Her eyes bulged when she saw this woman looking at her and speaking. The intern and medical resident were also amazed and promptly asked what had happened. When I responded that we had all just finished praying for her, they just looked stunned and one said that he had never heard a physician say that before. The miracle of this was that the patient had twelve hours of conversation, which served to be a great blessing to her family. At the end of about twelve hours, her heart finally gave out and she was unable to be resuscitated. Many weeks later, a letter from the son (which turned out to be on a lawyer's letterhead) expressed his gratitude for allowing him to pray for his mother and how much it meant to him and his sister. This was another example of a healing of the patient. Though only transient, it was brought about by the power of the Holy Spirit.

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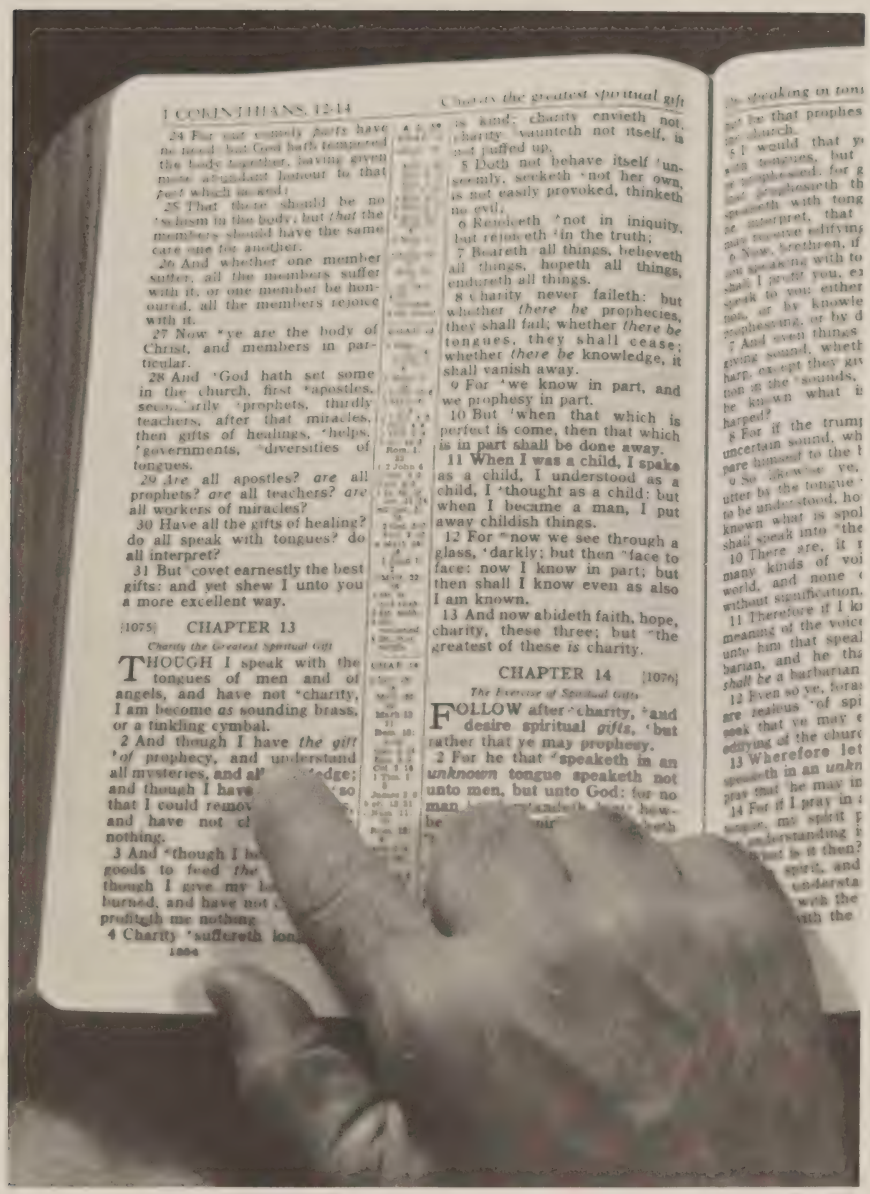
Another example of healing concerned a 70-year-old woman who had fallen and fractured her wrist. The nerves of her wrist were damaged having been in a wrist cast for some time. She was suffering from a "dropped wrist" due to this nerve damage, being unable to use it in a normal fashion. Nerve stimulation studies confirmed the damage to her wrist. She was scheduled for hand and wrist surgery on a given Tuesday. Monday night she called her prayer group for an all-night prayer vigil for a healing. Tuesday morning her "wrist drop" had disappeared and surgery was canceled. She had suffered with this condition for several months before surgery. The surgeon couldn't believe it and called me on the phone. He had never seen anything like this before. In practice there are many healings, many are long-term healings, but in my experience very few are as "instant" as this was.

The Still Small Voice

How many times have you and I ignored the "inner voice" urging us to make that phone call to a particular person or to write that letter or to make that visit? How many times has that one crucial opportunity been lost forever, passed by, acted upon too late, never to return again? On the other hand, do you recall the joy, satisfaction, the relief when each of us did listen and did react to God's urgings? I would like to relate a recent event centered around God's attempting to speak to me. It is an example of being "tuned in." The reader undoubtedly can recall similar experiences in his or her life as well. If at all possible my habit has been to try to see my hospital patients the first thing in the morning before starting my office hours. On this particular morning, I was a bit late having experienced a number of unexpected problems among the hospital patients. A lovely 72-year-old lady, a patient of mine for about 15 years, had recently been diagnosed as having acute leukemia and was recently hospitalized for intensive chemotherapy under the care of one of our oncologists.

Over the years, I've always tried to make an effort to see my patients who may be admitted to a different service, e.g., the surgical service or in this case, the oncology service. This would be a "social call" to check on how their condition was progressing or how they were coping. The inner voice again said, "Visit Mrs. M. even though you are pressed for time and rushing to get to the office." Part of me responded, "It would be more convenient to see her at noon or at the end of the day." Still came the voice back with, "Go now." As I entered the room, she disarmed me with her warm, friendly manner and remarked how happy she was to see me. She was a very spiritual woman and over the years frequently had quite openly discussed how much God had done for her. We stayed together, holding hands and having a good conversation; it was very much a prayerful visit that lasted about 20 minutes. She was alert throughout this time and although she was not feeling well, she did not appear to be critically ill. At the conclusion of our visit, she mentioned how much the visit had meant to her and once again thanked me for stopping in to see her. When asked if I would visit her again, I reassured her that I would stop by every day during her hospital stay. As I left the room she waved, and reflecting a certain inner peace, she smiled again and laid her head back on the pillow. Fifteen minutes later, the hospital


I CORINTHIANS, 12-14
Charity the greatest spiritual gift
24 For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked:
25 That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another.
26 And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.
27 Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.
28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.
29 Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles?
30 Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?
31 But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.
[1075] CHAPTER 13
Charity the Greatest Spiritual Gift
THOUGH I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.
2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have so that I could remove and have not charity, I am nothing.
3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.
4 Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,
5 Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;
6 Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;
7 Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.
8 Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.
9 For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.
10 But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.
11 When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.
12 For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.
13 And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.
CHAPTER 14 [1076]
The Exercise of Spiritual Gifts
FOLLOW after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy.
2 For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man
be
1264

floor nurse called my office to say that Mrs. M. had quietly expired quite unexpectedly. I thanked God I had not waited to visit her later in the day.

Praying Daily with Patients

Where have I been for the past several years and where am I going? I've become "unzipped," less uptight with patients, and therefore more vulnerable. With discernment, I now pray daily two or three times a day with patients and will continue to do so in the future. I've seen the Lord work miracles not only in my own life but in the lives of others, and this is on-going day after day. I've learned to be more attentive, talk less and listen more when with patients.

The results of praying for a particular person's needs are always shared at our next meeting. Knowing the Lord had a plan for each of us, if the prayers bring different or unexpected results we acknowledge this and continue to pray for God's plan and remain open to it. When prayers are answered as hoped for, we rejoice and share with others. I have also prayed with relatives of a patient, prayer groups, friends, clergy and other paramedical or health care professionals. In these instances, there appears greater spiritual energy by the laying on of hands with the Lord working through several people to "flood" the patient with His healing power. So, one can see, there has been quite a transformation in my life, vis-à-vis the daily practice of medicine.

Seeds of Peace, Waters of Justice

VINCENT KAVALOSKI

In 1990 FiP is sponsoring a "Worldwide Day of Prayer and Meditation to Help Heal Mother Earth." As we look forward to that event, we are bringing you a series of articles that celebrate the beauty of the earth and the dangers confronting it. The following poem mourns all that which has despoiled and destroyed our planet and our spirit, yet closes with hope that "the lantern made of love" will remind us of the healing power of love and unity.

Vince Kavaloski

Who Are We, People of Earth?

We are Many
    We are One
We are the lost children of Creation
Wandering through the long
    Nightmare of History

Vince Kavaloski is a poet, peace activist and teacher of philosophy living in rural Wisconsin. He and his wife Jane are co-Directors of the Ecumenical Partnership for Peace and Justice sponsored by the Wisconsin Conference of Churches.

We are Black, Yellow, Brown, White, Red
We are followers of Jesus,
    followers of the Buddha
    followers of Mohammed
    followers of Lao Tse
    followers of Abraham
    followers of the Great Spirit.
We are from the land of the lotus
    the land of the oak tree
    the land of the plains,
    the mountains, deserts, seas
    the land of all lands being
    the land of earth.
We are Many
    But we are One.
We are lovers, despoilers, destroyers, sustainers.
We spread our love across the planet
    like a sunrise.
We spread our hate across the planet
    like a plague.
We are warriors, the exploiters, the power-seekers,
and we poison the fragile wonder of this
    world with iron monsters
of our own demented genius.
We are also the healers, the peace-seekers, the justice-lovers,
and we bind-up the wounds in one another which we
ourselves have ripped-open.
But more than all this (How can there be a "more than all this"?)
We would be the people of hope
    seeking the Love that is great
    within us, the Love that
    has no limit which some
    call God.
We would be the people planting seeds of peace
    in a warring world.
Pouring down waters of justice
    in a long, dry season
Tending the fragile blossoms of human kindness
    in a longdry season

Laboring through despair and beyond despair
in a long, dry season
Waiting for the distant, always envisioned
harvest of human wholeness.

Awakening: The Ninth Day of Creation

The 7th Day was rest and celebration
Well-deserved (and have we really understood it?)
The 8th Day was History and we were busy
Building Temples of Conceit
Erecting Walls of Division
Making Rivers of Blood to flow
Now we stand facing the sunset of history
Seeing the desolation where once the
Garden grew
Knowing at last that the apple was separation
and separation is death.
All we are and can be is bound
together in the sticky web of Creation,
caught-up in the iridescent tangle
of seas and skies, wind and rain,
love and power and the
power of love.
So our poison fumes bathe one another's children in cancer, poverty
and ugliness beyond bearing.
The height of our technology is an intricate
system of defense that threatens to
destroy you destroying me, destroying us all.
Aren't we bound together too, in
the web of our own mad making?
The earth had become a small boat
with warring rowers
drifting amidst the gathering storm.
A frail rudder called awareness
guides us fitfully toward
a distant unknown shore.
Are we awakening?
This is the 9th Day of Creation

Come Together, Can We?

Let the big sky of earth open wide
Let the fires of Creation burst forth again,
Let the people of earth come together
in the generous clearing called faith.
Let us gather in that place where
all we share together stands always
new always old always larger
than the blood-stained walls
that divide us.
Where is this place?
    Beyond race, beyond ideology, beyond belief
    Beyond these things which define us
    and divide us but are only partly us.
    Beyond them yes, but we cannot
    go around
    or over
    We must go straight through
    Facing the tangle of differences.
But as we go forward in the dark seeking ourselves
in one another, who will hold up the
lantern made of love, hold it high
in the dark tangled place where so many times
before we have lost our way?
Who will remind us, groping in
the undergrowth, of the roots
writhing deep beneath our feet
in the timeless embrace of
unity?

The Power of Imagination

SHIRLEY BRIGGS

Here is a remarkable story of personal growth. The writer decided to overcome her worst fear, public speaking, by simply facing it. The happy outcome of her efforts will inspire anyone who wants to be free of a fear—which means most of us!

Proverbs 23:7 states: "For as he thinketh in his heart, so *is* he . . . For years I used the power of my mind to create a paralyzing inferiority complex. It seemed my fears had fears and they jumped out at me from all corners and places like monsters in the dark. I could almost feel the life force being strangled from me.

My luck changed for the better when I discovered a church where positive living principles were taught—and lived. I sought counseling from the associate minister and started the process of learning how to love myself. I was told I could do and be anything I desired as long as I was willing to work very hard.

I took an inventory of my life and decided I would face my greatest fear first—public speaking. During my school years I took a failing grade rather than speak up in class. I wanted to overcome this giant fear. I got up my courage and made a phone call to enroll in a class for the development of public speaking ability.

Each week I attended class and gave a two minute speech. I visualized that I was speaking with friends and that I was a confident, dynamic speaker. As the weeks melted into one another I found that my knees stopped chattering, the dry-as-cotton feeling in my mouth disappeared, the ice water in my veins turned warm—and I was starting to enjoy class. I won a few special awards with my speeches. My confidence was growing.

After this class was completed I joined another, more competitive, speaking group. I was surprised when after a few months of membership I was asked to compete in a speech contest. The other contestants were

Shirley Briggs, who edits Circle of Love, *is a frequent contributor to religious magazines and journals. She says that among her "passionate purposes" are nature, butter pecan ice cream, and Christy, her cat.*

Tom Dunham

seasoned veterans and I could feel that old familiar fear squeezing my insides while at the same time I said, "Yes, of course, I would love to be a contestant."

After the speeches were completed it was time for the voting and the awarding of the best speaker honors. The second and third best speaker names were called and then there remained the best speaker award. I thought this would go to a member of the group who usually walked away with all the speaking awards—even in national competition. Sure enough, I heard his name being called as first place winner—but there was more. There was a tie for first place and I heard—my name. I walked in frozen disbelief to the front of the room to take my place with the other award winners.

After the awards and the thank you speeches I was preparing to leave the building when a woman from the audience came up to me and said, "Your speech touched me very deeply. You speak from the heart—to the heart. I hope you never lose your interest in public speaking because it is certain you will never lose an audience." I had become the very person I visualized myself to be.

I wrote all my speeches out and decided to send some of these materials to magazines and was delighted when many of them were accepted for publication. I was getting into the very feeling of being a writer. When people would ask what I did I responded, "I'm a writer." Writing was becoming the passionate purpose of my life. My former greatest fear—public speaking—had turned into one of my greatest joys—and now I was a writer.

I found that the same mind which had made me ill with fear could be used to fill me with joy. The crippling fears I had experienced for so many years dissolved from my life and returned to the nothingness from which they had come. I found that as I took a first step in faith the Universe reached out to help me make all the others.

Come to the edge of your greatest fear, jump off into space—and you will discover that you can—fly.

A Spirituality of Aging

CARL J. C. WOLF

"What do you do with yourself, not that you are retired?" Friends kept asking me that question in the beginning, no doubt with genuine interest. They once knew me in my professional role as a man who was always on the move, always involved, always producing. They couldn't imagine how a person who was previously so active would now fill his time.

That was several years ago. Now, when people ask, I suggest gently that they have the wrong question. "When you meet a little child for the first time, you don't ask, 'And what do you *do*?' " That is the question to adults. Rather, "What's *your* name?" This gives the child a chance to tell you who he/she *is*.

In my aging years, like a little child, I no longer want to *do*. I want to *be*. Jesus said, "Whoever does not receive the Kingdom of God like a child will never enter it." (Mark 10:15) The spirituality of aging is a time for wandering in the Kingdom of God, a time for *being*.

I am experiencing this stage of life as a journey of being. By spirituality I mean the living of a person's religious faith, including its motivation and consequences. While it can happen for young and old alike, I believe that the person of later years has a special opportunity to engage "the holy" in a unique dimension. One thing about spirituality—you have got to know what you are reaching for, or it remains plain religion.

There is a difference between getting older and growing into old age. Some individuals in their mature years bog down in nostalgia, remembering and rehearsing the past, and playing with the fantasy of one more youthful quest. Others make an exciting choice. They enter the way of spiritual pilgrimage; they explore the heights and depths of relation with the Presence who longs to dwell in the inner self. For these, the maturing years offer a wonder-full adventure with the Spirit of God.

This pilgrimage helps me to answer the questions, "Who *am* I?" and "Who am I *becoming*?" The insights have come to me through medita-

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"This is a highly inspired, ethical publication. Love streams out of it!" "Part of my devotional reading every day." "I find your articles about different beliefs very interesting and informative. They make for better understanding among all persons." "It strengthens my faith in prayer." "The idea of interreligious understanding and cooperation is very dear to me. This is the way to peace." "I love it! It is well written by beautiful, loving people! It is delightful, inspirational, and uplifting. Thank you!"

If you, too, find *Fellowship in Prayer* "a joy and inspiration" to read, won't you take a moment to read and fill in the other side of this page?

Paul Walsh
President
Fellowship in Prayer

tion, reading, journaling, and prayer. I could add traveling, a hobby, and volunteer work; but those are secondary. They simply add a bit of flavor.

I have always kept a running journal of sorts. Now, however, I engage in serious "journaling." This means more than a diary. It provides a place to ponder and write down the long thoughts; about people, places, and experiences that have led up to today. Without watching a clock and without the need to *produce* anything, this notebook allows me to ruminate the great ideas of the human family, to compare great thinkers with each other, and to play with my own response. Whether I agree or disagree, or even toy with a bit of heresy (personal choice) now and then, so be it. This is the growing edge of my faith experience. I have found the most help for "journaling" in Morton Kelsey's *Adventure Inward* (Augsburg Pub. House, 1980).

Perhaps because reading has been a delight since childhood, my childlike mind now exults in roaming at will through the forests of available books. Scripture has always been important, but I no longer confine myself to the Christian Bible with which I was raised. The scriptures and myths of all ages open up undreamed-of truths. The "new book shelf" at the library presents an endless challenge. However, the sweepstakes of this leisure period has happened while rummaging through the library stacks to discover authors and books I never knew existed. The bibliographies from this random reading in turn lead me to other writers, until my list of "to read" books will last to eternity. It all gives depth to the heart as many, many spirits speak to my spirit.

A bonus of old-age reading is finding books written by authors in advanced years. As examples, here are three octogenarians: Carl G. Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* (Random House Vintage edition, 1961); Florida Scott-Maxwell, *The Measure of My Days* (Penguin Books, 1979); Helen Luke, *Old Age* (Parabola Books, 1987).

There is spirituality in music, either playing or listening. Albert Schweitzer, despite the arthritis and emphysema of his later years, performed a miracle—with God—every morning. He straightened out his fingers and played Bach for a half-hour before breakfast. He told the tired and overworked doctors and nurses that he and the piano were frail and old, but the spirit was there.

I will not describe my method of meditation and prayer. There are already enough books and pamphlets available for anyone who is serious

Tom Dunham

about these disciplines. I simply testify that there is no substitute for prayer in the process of becoming.

I do keep a separate notebook for recording my private meditations and prayers. To these I add quotations and prayers of other people who bring insight and inspiration to my heart. This has developed into a personal devotional volume.

John Yungblut, in *Rediscovering Prayer* (Seabury, 1972) says, "At whatever age the meridian (of life) is passed in the individual instance, I would suggest that . . . one should add to his regular discipline a new form of prayer—that of coming to terms creatively with his own approaching death. . . ." Among his reasons he offers ". . . the sense of a mystical union with God, a transcendence of death through a readiness to die into it . . . faith that individuality must survive death. . . ." For me, personally, this practice has led to a freedom in living *now* which I never imagined could exist.

No matter how fortunate a person is, sooner or later the process of aging brings limitations. Even as this has become a part of my own experience, I have discovered the spiritual dimension within it. The insight is found within a prayer by Teilhard de Chardin.

> "When the signs of age begin to mark my body (and still more when they touch my mind); when the ill that is to diminish me or carry me off strikes from without or is born within me; when the painful moment comes in which I suddenly awaken to the fact that I am ill or growing old; and above all at that last moment when I feel I am losing hold of myself and am absolutely passive within the hands of the great unknown forces that have formed me; in all those dark moments, O God, grant that I may understand that it is You who are painfully parting the fibres of my being in order to penetrate to the very marrow of my substance and bear me away within Yourself."

Jewish

Lift up your hands toward the sanctuary and bless the Lord. Blessed are thou, O Lord, our God, King of the universe, Who bringest forth bread from the earth.

Protestant

Bless, O Lord, this food to our use, and us to Thy service, and make us ever mindful of the needs of others; in Jesus' name. Amen.

Buddhist

First, let us reflect on our own work
and the effort of those who brought us this food.
Secondly, let us be aware of the quality of our deeds
as we receive this meal.
Thirdly, what is most essential is the practice of mindfulness
which helps us transcend greed, anger, and delusion.
Fourthly, we appreciate this food
which sustains the good health of our body and mind.
Fifthly, in order to continue our practice for all beings
we accept this offering.

Roman Catholic

Bless us, O Lord, and these Thy gifts, which we are about to receive from Thy bounty; through Christ our Lord. Amen

Greek Orthodox

O God, merciful in love and might, we thank Thee for Thy gifts. Let Thy holy will become supreme in all our thoughts, words, and deeds; in the name of our blessed Savior. Amen

Please send your favorite prayer or one you have written yourself to The Editor, Fellowship in Prayer, *291 Witherspoon Street, Princeton, NJ 08542.*

Tom Dunham

THERE HE GOES AGAIN...

BY SANDY HUFFAKER

RUNNING, RUNNING, RUNNING... THEN I DECIDE TO STOP AND LISTEN. UH-OH, I HEAR A STRANGE GNAWING SOUND UNDER THE BED... MAYBE IT'S **BIG**, **BAD** AND **UGLY**, OR MAYBE IT ISN'T. EITHER IT CAN BE TAMED, OR I'LL GET EATEN—BUT THE RUNNING WAS TOO COMPULSIVE TO BE HEALTHY, SO I MUST TAKE A PEEK. I'LL NAME IT (ANGER, FEAR, PRIDE, GUILT, OR SOMETHING) SO IT WON'T BE SO SCARY. I RAISE THE COVERS AND TAKE A LOOK...

OH, NO! I RECOGNIZE THE **UNCONSCIOUS EYES**, **RAZOR TEETH** AND THE **LOW GROWL** UNDER THAT **CHESHIRE SMILE**—IT'S **FAMILY RESENTMENT** AGAIN! I'VE BROUGHT HIM INTO THE LIGHT MANY TIMES BEFORE—TALKED, CRIED AND FOUGHT WITH HIM, TO NO AVAIL. HE DOESN'T LISTEN, WORK OR SEEM TO CARE. TRY POSITIVE RE-ENFORCEMENT—**HE BITES!** TRY NEGATIVE RE-ENFORCEMENT—**HE BITES!** AFTER ALL THESE YEARS, SOMETHING DEEP INSIDE FINALLY SAYS TO ME: **LET GO** AND **PRAY.** I DO IT.

AN ODD NEW APPROACH POPS UP FROM THE SUBCONSCIOUS WHERE GOD WORKS—IGNORE THE BEAST AND LOOK AT MY **REACTIONS** TO HIM. WHAT IS **LACKING** (DEPENDENT) IN ME THAT I **CARE** WHAT HE DOES? I TURN AND LEAVE THE ROOM... STRANGELY, I DON'T HEAR HIM JUMPING UP AND DOWN ON THE BED ANYMORE.

HE HAS NO ONE TO PLAY WITH.

Please send the story of your own "transforming experience" to The Editor, Fellowship in Prayer, *291 Witherspoon Street, Princeton, NJ 08542.*

Praying for my Boss

Does God answer prayers? And how! He once answered my deepest need by instructing my heart, I know not how.

I worked for a man I liked who also liked me. But every day he sat on me—figuratively speaking—and drained me of all inner strength. Finally I had had all I could bear (bare).

I remembered advice of a clergyman: "Pray first for people you like the least." My liking had turned to resentment. In desperation I began to pray for my boss—first, before family or friends. I prayed for a year. There was no change. I stubbornly continued to pray.

Gradually a cloud lifted from my spirit. I still was hurt by him, but I began to feel free of him. I became aware that I was stronger than he. I began to feel sorry for him. Sorrow turned into compassion to deep pity. Pity opened the door to new and deeper understanding. I felt that my boss needed to feel superior to me—to exist. He was lonely, despondent. I learned to care for him in a new way. He needed me more than I needed him. It was as if our positions were reversed. The more I prayed the stronger I seemed to become. I was fed by an inner spring. God caused a flow of fresh water to gush forth for me.

My boss is now dead but I believe God's compassion rests on him. As I pray it rests on me. I believe he rests in peace from the tumult of his restless heart. I have received what I sought to give. Blessings to both ways, I learned.

Bless the Lord, oh my soul! How wonderful thy ways, past finding out.

Bless the Lord, oh my soul! Who forgives all our iniquities, who heals all our diseases, who redeems our lives from destruction.

The author, now retired from a highly successful career in NYC, has requested that we withhold his name, to protect the relatives and friends of the person to whom he is referring.

"A Forgiveness Meditation"

STEPHEN LEVINE

To be read slowly to a friend or silently to oneself.

Begin to reflect for a moment on what the word "forgiveness" might mean. What is forgiveness? What might it be to bring forgiveness into one's life, into one's mind?

Begin by slowly bringing into your mind, into your heart, the image of someone for whom you have some resentment. Gently allow a picture, a feeling, a sense of them to gather there. Gently now invite them into your heart just for this moment.

Notice whatever fear or anger may arise to limit or deny their entrance and soften gently all about it. No force. Just an experiment in truth which invites this person in.

And silently in your heart say to this person, "I forgive you."

Open to a sense of their presence and say, "I forgive you for whatever pain you may have caused me in the past, intentionally or unintentionally, through your words, your thoughts, your actions. However you may have caused me pain in the past, I forgive you."

Feel for even a moment the spaciousness relating to that person with the possibility of forgiveness.

Let go of those walls, those curtains of resentment, so that your heart may be free. So that your life may be lighter.

"I forgive you for whatever you may have done that caused me pain, intentionally or unintentionally, through your actions, through your words, even through your thoughts, through whatever you did. Through whatever you didn't do. However the pain came to me through you, I forgive you. I forgive you."

It is so painful to put someone out of your heart. Let go of that pain. Let them be touched for this moment at least with the warmth of your forgiveness.

"I forgive you. I forgive you."

Allow that person to just be there in the stillness, in the warmth and

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Sergio Bonotto

patience of the heart. Let them be forgiven. Let the distance between you dissolve in mercy and compassion.

Let it be so.

Now, having finished so much business, dissolved in forgiveness, allow that being to go on their way. Not pushing or pulling them from the heart, but simply letting them be on their own way, touched by a blessing and the possibility of your forgiveness.

And now gently, giving yourself whatever time is necessary, allow the other person to dissolve as you invite another in.

Now gently bring into your mind, into your heart, the image, the sense, of someone who has resentment for you. Someone whose heart is closed to you.

Notice whatever limits their entrance and soften all about that hardness. Let it float.

Mercifully invite them into your heart and say to them, "I ask your forgiveness."

"I ask your forgiveness."

"I ask to be let back into your heart. That you forgive me for whatever I may have done in the past that caused you pain, intentionally or unintentionally, through my words, my actions, even through my thoughts."

"However I may have hurt or injured you, whatever confusion, whatever fear of mind caused you pain, I ask your forgiveness."

And allow yourself to be touched by their forgiveness. Allow yourself to be forgiven. Allow yourself back into their heart.

Have mercy on you. Have mercy on them. Allow them to forgive you.

Feel their forgiveness touch you. Receive it. Draw it into your heart.

"I ask your forgiveness for however I may have caused you pain in the past. Through my anger, through my lust, through my fear, my ignorance, my blindness, my doubt, my confusion. However I may have caused you pain. I ask that you let me back into your heart. I ask your forgiveness."

Let it be. Allow yourself to be forgiven.

If the mind attempts to block forgiveness with merciless indictments, recriminations, judgments, just see the nature of the unkind mind. See how merciless we are with ourselves. And let this unkind mind be touched by the warmth and patience of forgiveness.

Let your heart touch this other heart so that it may receive forgiveness. So that it may feel whole again.

Let it be so.

Feel their forgiveness now as it touches you.

If the mind pulls back, thinks it deserves to suffer, see this merciless mind. Let it sink into the heart. Allow yourself to be touched by the possibility of forgiveness.

Receive the forgiveness.

Let it be.

And now gently bid that person adieu and with a blessing let them be on their way, having even for a millisecond shared the one heart beyond the confusion of seemingly separate minds.

And now gently turn to yourself in your own heart and say, "I forgive you," to you.

It is so painful to put ourselves out of our hearts.

Say, "I forgive you," to yourself.

Calling out to yourself in your heart, using your own first name, say, "I forgive you" to you.

If the mind interposes with hard thoughts, such as that it is self-indulgent to forgive oneself, if it judges, if it touches you with anger and unkindness, just feel that hardness and let it soften at the edge. Let it be touched by forgiveness.

Allow yourself back into your heart. Allow you to be forgiven by you.

Let the world back into your heart. Allow yourself to be forgiven.

Let that forgiveness fill your whole body.

Feel the warmth and care that washes your own well-being. Seeing yourself as if you were your only child, let yourself be bathed by this mercy and kindness. Let yourself be loved. See your forgiveness forever awaiting your return to your heart.

How unkind we are to ourselves. How little mercy. Let it go. Allow yourself to embrace yourself with forgiveness. Know that in this moment you are wholly and completely forgiven. Not it is up to you just to allow it in. See yourself in the infinitely compassionate eyes of the Buddha, in the sacred heart of Jesus, in the warm embrace of the Goddess.

Let yourself be loved. Let yourself be love.

And now begin to share this miracle of forgiveness, of mercy and awareness. Let it extend out to all the people around you.

Let all be touched by the power of forgiveness. All those beings who also have known such pain. Who have so often put themselves and others out of their hearts. Who have so often felt so isolated, so lost.

Touch them with your forgiveness, with your mercy and loving kindness, that they too may be healed just as you wish to be.

Feel the heart we all share filled with forgiveness so that we all might be whole.

Let the mercy keep radiating outward until it encompasses the whole planet. The whole planet floating in your heart, in mercy, in loving kindness, in care.

May all sentient beings be freed of their suffering, of their anger, of their confusion, of their fear, of their doubt.

May all beings know the joy of their true nature.

May all beings be free from suffering.

Whole world floating in the heart. All beings freed of their suffering. All beings' hearts open, minds clear. All beings at peace.

May all beings at every level of reality, on every plane of existence, may they all be freed of their suffering. May they all be at peace.

May we heal the world, touching it again and again with forgiveness. May we heal our hearts and the hearts of those we love by merging in forgiveness, by merging in peace.

Surrender

ANNA B. KURZWEIL

It was a beautiful October morning; bright blue sky dotted with a few white clouds here and there. I was in my position in choir with the other thirteen members. We were waiting for the hearse to arrive with the remains of twenty-nine-year-old Julie. The church was packed with young people. A deep silence was broken only now and then by sniffles.

As I sat looking out the window, waiting and reflecting, I became aware of the beautiful leaves that were tumbling down, some green, some yellow, and some golden brown. It seemed to me they were saying, "Look! Listen! You have something to learn."

I did listen, and as I did, this reflection crept into my mind. "Just as the trees are surrendering their leaves one by one until they become bare—standing naked before the universe, so we too must surrender our ideas, opinions, beliefs, possessions; the more we surrender now, the more we let go now, the easier death will be—for we cannot cross over the threshold of death unless we have completely surrendered everything."

As Job said, "Naked I came forth from my mother's womb, and naked shall I go back!" (Job 1.21).

Anna B. Kurzweil, a writer from Kansas City, MO, studied theology and received spiritual direction in contemplative prayer at the St. Benedict House of Studies in Würzburg, Germany.

To Kneel in Prayer

CAROL PASSMORE

The physical position one takes to pray should be, I felt, of little importance. As a teenager I sometimes knelt in my closet, sometimes went into the woods and shouted my prayers at God, the better, I suppose, to be heard. After dissension over race relations separated me from my Southern Baptist upbringing, I became active in the Religious Society of Friends, attracted to their testimonies and more particularly to the simplicity of their form of worship.

As I approached my fortieth birthday I became aware that, though I was active in most aspects of the Friends Meeting, I was giving little time to individual religious study and prayer. At this time my three children were pre-teen (a large part of the reason I had little time for myself) and I was searching for the direction my life would take as being a mother was no longer my primary occupation.

Last winter, several years into my efforts to find more time for myself, I was alone one day in the house, reading some religious material. I wished to pray and suddenly felt that I must kneel. I hesitated and felt as though two large hands were on my shoulders, pushing me gently toward the floor. But I refused to kneel, whether because I hadn't rid myself entirely of my "Baptist baggage" or because I wasn't yet ready to hear God's direction for my life, I don't know.

Instead I stood and silently screamed, "This isn't fair, God. I won't kneel. I'm a Quaker. Remember us, God. We wear blue jeans to Meeting and don't worry about the outward forms of worship."

I felt like a child so convinced that she is right and her parents wrong that she refuses their command. But I would not kneel. After wiping away my defiant tears I went to the phone and joined a prayer group soon to start at my Meeting, a group I had not previously considered joining.

Learning more about prayer on an intellectual level in the study group was helpful but the prayer exercises were not possible for me. For three months I remained defiant and did battle with myself before I was able

Carol Passmore, the mother of three children, pursues her writing career in Durham, NC, where she is an active member of the Friends Meeting.

to kneel. I did so mainly because the defiance had exhausted me. When I knelt, there followed a period of deep and renewing prayer after which I felt much clearer in my relationship with God.

During the following summer I joined another prayer group at a weeklong gathering of Friends. The intensity of meeting daily for four hours to study prayer and to pray was difficult but rewarding for me.

I still have three teenagers in the house and quiet moments are rare. I sometimes kneel to pray, sometimes visualize myself on my knees. I still hope physical position is not important, still strive to follow Thomas Kelly's urging that we pray without ceasing, and still have a long road before me as I grow in my prayer life but rejoice that the journey is begun and offers so much.

In Search of a Hermitage

SR. ROSEMARIE

A religious vocation that has reappeared in our time, after a long period of decline, is that of the hermit. A hermit pursues the spiritual life in solitude, rather than in community. Most Americans who have chosen this rigorous path in recent years acknowledge the influence of Thomas Merton, the author of The Seven Storey Mountain, *and over 50 other books on the spiritual life. After two decades as a monk at Gethsemani in Kentucky, Father Merton received permission from his order to become a hermit and moved to a tiny one-room house on the Monastery's grounds. He spent most of the latter years of his life in this hermitage, where he divided his time between contemplative prayer and writing.*

In the following article, a Roman Catholic nun describes a spiritual odyssey that has taken her from the United States to Africa and Canada and included several experiences of temporary hermitage. Today she is looking for a permanent hermitage.

I entered the Poor Clare Monastery 25 years ago thinking I would never leave those four walls. My sister jokes: "Join the Poor Clares and see the world!" The year after my Final Profession found me co-founder with six other American Sisters on their way to Africa to begin a Monastery there. I remember telling the Abbess of our Malawian Monastery when I first arrived in Africa: "I don't know what I'm doing here, because I really want to be a hermit!" Such is the mystery of God's call in our life. Now I understand that my 8 years in Africa were my first "hermitage" experience. When one learns a new language and culture one learns a bit about solitude.

In 1979 my first real hermit experience began at a Benedictine Abbey in Saskatchewan, Canada. Here I realized how much of an African "hermit" I had become through the painful reentry back into the West. I had changed in values and in vision. Perhaps I can only share with you highlight memories from this journey. Initially, it felt like going through fire as I let go of Africa and my beloved Community. Leaving behind warm, sisterly relationships and laughing African faces, whose beautiful harmonies and dancing catch one up into the ecstasy of God, is a painful fire. The cabin in the Saskatchewan woods brought a new encounter with the Holy One as I let go of externals and entered into the solitude

of the heart to find there the warmth of Love, the Beauty of Eternal Harmony, and the Stillness of Dancing. I remember becoming aware of Absolute Truth for the first time as I studied the early Desert Fathers and the works of Theresa of Avila and John of the Cross. The "ordinary" of Saskatchewan's blizzards was certainly not the "ordinary" of a Californian's winter, and I found (as in Africa), that we encounter the cross as well as our "prunings" in the daily events of our lives. Somehow after the Saskatchewan experience I can empathize with people sent to Siberia! In a simple cabin the biting winds creep through every crack and into the marrow of one's bones. But after the winds have subsided the stillness of snow encompasses one with Healing Silence.

After a year and a half and sickness, God blessed me with the grandeur of a hermitage in Big Sur for four years. There the blueness and infinity of the vast ocean lies before you and draws you into the depths of your unconscious, your being. "Deep calls unto deep in the roar of your cataracts. All your waves have washed over me . . ." It is the silence and the solitude which "work" on you. "Our God is a Fiery Furnace of Love," Catherine de Hueck once wrote to me from Madonna House. In the forest, the hermit is called to see and to hear in a new way. Genesis speaks of God in the "still, small voice of the gentle breeze." Merton writes of "the wind in the pine trees," and a Buddhist Nun of "the windless pines." I have "seen and heard" God in the wind, experienced the Sun-lit pines and the dance of the Light through them.

After six years of deep solitude and silence I was "on the road" to find a Monastery in my Order where I could live permanently. The Journey took me by bus all the way to New York and then to British Columbia and then the San Antonio Mission and the Army base. What a contrast with the serenity of Big Sur! From this "hermitage" I could look out and see bombs exploding and hear tanks and machine gun fire. The vibrations of evil and war felt overpowering, but to take into oneself the sufferings as well as the hopes of humanity is part of the life of prayer.

God led me to my next site in Arroyo Grande to take into my heart the fear and anxiety of living near a nuclear reactor and to encompass the world's environmental concerns in prayer. The woman on whose property I was located was going to spend a year in China, and her journey as well as the Chinese Church in its complex state of Patriotic and Vatican allegiance became a central prayer concern. In murmuring, singing stream and mirror-like pool, I heard the voice of God. Awakened at

night by a drunken driver hitting an electrical pole, I was kept aware, too, of the darkness of the world that needs Healing Light. I hoped this might be my permanent hermitage, but orders came to "move on."

Next, to Big Bear and an untouched section of forest where the dancing light on the lake reminds you—as Mary Summer Rain has written—this is the way God meant us to live. This is our Indian heritage which we must once again discover and re-create. We are not meant to base our life on materialism and "stuff." We are meant to live close to the earth; the forest; the lakes; the land . . . but we have only "resorts" left. How, Lord, can we rediscover our true selves and the beauty of our world? Next I was led to a Vipassana Buddhist center and a Thai monk who had taken the Bodhisattva vow not to enter into nirvana, but to go back into the world and lead others to the Light. He led me in a Vipassana retreat, and I discovered in this Buddhist practice the roots of my Poor Clare way of life. Though he asked me to stay and help him run the "center," my vocation is not the Bodhisattva vow, but the vow of enclosure, and I had to move on.

This time, to Desert Hot Springs and the discovery of the desert's wonder and the cosmic daily liturgy of the rising sun. I look up to the Big Bear Snowy summit and hold in my heart memories of sacred forests and lakes. The summit points so magnificently skywards—"your Love, Lord, reaches to the heavens, your truth to the skies." The stars in the night sky become the "singing silence," but also the howling winds by

S. A. Wright

day and night echo the howling of the soul's inevitable anguish. Then there is the seering summer sun—"like a dry, thirsty land I stretch out my hands to you." The seering sun pushed me on and up to the Santa Rosa mountains, and a most perfect hermitage on the sacred grounds of an Indian reservation. Such a holy experience to absorb the heritage of our Indian people—as well as to share their experience of no water . . . The one marring factor on this otherwise magnificent summit was constant gunfire that went on in a cabin across the ridge. One day I walked over to see what they were all shooting at, and discovered a cabin which had been donated to the forestry, all shot up in gay partying. When, Lord, will we "turn our swords into plough shares" and leave our nerve-shattering noise and guns behind?

The next chapter in this long though spiritually enriching journey contained attacks of malaria and two hospitalizations. During this time of waiting I explored a nearby Hindu Ashram whose temple is dedicated to all the religions of the world, this vision of the God who though called by many names through many paths of religions, is ONE. I read of the many Indian yogis who go up to the snow-capped mountains of the Himalayas where "God dwells," and who live their lives of meditation and vision in the solitude of caves. Yes, the hermit life is ordinary, but it can also lead into steep paths of ascent, and seering valleys of the sun before we find our "ordinariness" in a permanent place. Such has been my journey into hermitage . . . my search . . . may it find fulfillment soon.

We announce the death, on March 20, 1989, of Emilie, Lady Coote in Shaftesbury, England. Lady Coote, who was 91 years old, had been for many years a contributing editor and a very active and supportive member of Fellowship in Prayer. Her generosity, her compassion for her fellow human beings, and her desire to serve were among the most outstanding characteristics of this spiritually gifted friend. We mourn her passing, and in remembrance reproduce a short essay that Lady Emilie wrote some years ago.

> "My widowhood began in 1941. I was particularly fortunate because my husband and I had, for several years, been studying the subject of "death" to try to discover what it is. We found it is NOT. The dictionary defines "death" as 'extinction of life,' but we had learnt that life cannot be extinguished. Life *leaves* the body, so it is the body that becomes lifeless, not the person.
>
> Life is of God—are we not in His image and likeness? Once conceived, a person lives forever in a perpetual growth toward ultimate perfection. Life in the earthly body is but the beginning of eternal progress, and as a person leaves his body he emerges into a way of life that is similar to the one he has left, but where he can grow in grace, in knowledge and extended experience, all of which leads him toward ever greater fulfillment.
>
> We who are left behind feel loss, but if we are Christians we should know that there are 'many mansions' awaiting us where life is fuller and lovelier than here. If we acknowledge this we can rejoice that anyone dear to us has been privileged to go on in this way, and if we grieve, it is out of self-pity for ourselves."

A Memorial Fund has been established in Lady Coote's name, and we are grateful for the gifts already received.

Paul Walsh

I thank God for your Fellowship in Prayer. In your June, '88 issue, I read this: "The agonizing moments through which I have passed during the last few years have also drawn me closer to God." That sums up everything I can say about me and about my religion or closeness to God. Also, that is typical of the way in which a line or sentence in your magazine gives expression to details of beliefs I can't express.

I get your magazine from one of my fellow inmates and feel a strong urge to pass them on to another. In that same urge, I wish I could share it with all people I know outside this prison.

O.J.N.; Littleton, CO

This letter comes with my love and deep appreciation for you and for the way that God, through you and your co-workers continue to let the publication flow into an ever-enlarging circle of Love-Light for *all people*. Your editorials always move me to inner discovery and guidance.

Emily Sargent Councilman; Burlington, NC

As a constant reader of *FiP*, in gratitude I feel an urge to call to your attention a book I am reading for the second time, Aldous Huxley's *The Perennial Philosophy*. I originally read the book in 1944. As long ago as this was, my reading of *FiP* awakened echoes of it in my mind, and I decided to re-read it.

Like you, Huxley was concerned with the many paths human beings take to the true end of human existence—"the unitive knowledge of the imminent and transcendent Godhead." The quest seems more relevant to the world around and within us now than it did a half-century ago, because of the enormous shrinkage of space through the development of air travel and the tremendous dislocations caused by war. The U.S. is now home to people schooled in Judaic, Islamic, and Eastern traditions. Faces that seemed "exotic" years ago are now our neighbors.

Patricia M. Jordan; Ashaway, RI

I sent "Angela's Parables" to my dear, 85-year-old aunt, who recently lost her dog. She's a *dedicated* Christian Scientist and usually won't add any other spoke to the wheel, but she wants *FiP*!

Gladys Geppert; St. Petersburg, FLA

I love you! You have sent light to me on many dark days.
Bonnie K. Canavan; Galveston, TX

Thank you for the President's Message in your February, '89 issue [on living in the present—Ed.] It contains the secret of life! In fact, I find much spiritual nourishment in *FiP*.
Romana Hartel; Milwaukee, WI

Thank you for such a wonderful and inspiring publication. You have done much to bring down the imaginary walls separating the diverse manifestations of the One Faith: that this earthly life is only a small portion of our infinite potential. It is my desire to more actively support your work.
Terrence O. Church; Oklahoma City, OK

I am currently collecting definitions of happiness in preparation for a book which will be entitled *Happiness Is*. I would be grateful if readers who would like to contribute their definitions would send them to me at 2475 W. Atlantic Ave., Delray Beach, FLA. Here are a few sample definitions. "Happiness is found in a life for others" (Will Durant). "Happiness is a happening—with God" (David Augsburger). "Happiness is not the end of life; character is" (Henry Ward Beecher). "The greatest happiness will come to the world when we obey the commandment: 'Love one another' " (Helen Keller).
Rabbi Samuel Silver; Delray Beach, FLA

I really appreciate *FiP* and don't want to miss a single copy. It shows that in prayer, all are united. There are very good insights, and your articles are excellent.
S. Damian Schreiner; Great Bend, KS

I found the latest issue of *FiP* to be particularly helpful. Thank you for your efforts. The inspiration you print means more to me than you will ever know.
L. S. Wilkins; Alexandria, VA

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This bimonthly publication is endowed by the Ruth Allison Lilly Fund

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